

MILWAUKEE —Teach For America has announced its expansion to Milwaukee this fall, outlining plans to bring 90 top college graduates to teach in the city's highest-need schools over the next three years. Teach For America received a warm welcome from key local supporters, including Congresswoman Gwen Moore (WI-04) and Milwaukee Public Schools Superintendent William G. Andrekopoulos, during today's announcement at Westside Academy II.

"Throughout Milwaukee Public Schools, we are developing a capacity for change, focusing on improving student achievement, reducing the achievement gap, and increasing graduation rates," Andrekopoulos said. "By bringing in Teach for America, we're confirming that our students—and specifically those in our low-income communities—deserve to have the best, most highly motivated teachers and educational leaders working for them."

Teach For America is the national corps of outstanding recent college graduates who commit to teach for at least two years in urban and rural schools and become lifelong leaders in the pursuit of educational equity. The 3,700 incoming Teach For America corps members last year were selected from nearly 25,000 applicants, including 16 percent of the graduating class at Spelman College, 9 percent at Harvard University, and 7 percent at the University of Michigan. More than 50 graduates of the University of Wisconsin-Madison joined the 2008 corps, making UW the third-largest source of corps members, with a total of 354 since Teach For America's inception in 1990.

"We're excited to join Milwaukee in its efforts to improve educational outcomes for the city's students," said Wendy Kopp, founder and chief executive officer of Teach For America. "It has been gratifying to see the broad-based community support we have received under the leadership of Superintendent Andrekopoulos and the Milwaukee Board of School Directors. We also want to thank our philanthropic supporters, including the Kern Family Foundation, which committed the lead gift of \$1 million, the Walton Family Foundation, Daniel M. Soref Foundation, Faye McBeath Foundation, M&I Foundation, Augustin Ramirez and his family, and Ted and Mary Kellner. In addition, our expansion would not be possible without Marquette and Cardinal Stritch, our university partners in Milwaukee. Working with this strong Milwaukee coalition, we can help accelerate local efforts by providing a new pipeline of talented teachers and education leaders for the city."

"Educational excellence is vital to our region's social and economic progress," said Kern Family Foundation President Jim Rahn. "I'm pleased to join this group welcoming Teach For America to Milwaukee as part of the Kern Family Foundation's long-term education-reform agenda."

We're looking forward to building on the positive impact of Teach for America's corps members and alumni on our schools and communities."

Teach For America's university partners in Milwaukee will be Marquette and Cardinal Stritch universities. All area Teach For America corps members will enroll in one of the two universities for two years in order to complete Wisconsin's teacher licensure requirements, and will have the opportunity to obtain a master of arts degree in education. Corps members teaching in secondary and elementary classrooms will attend Marquette University, while those seeking certification in English as a second language, bilingual education, or special education will enroll at Cardinal Stritch University.

A growing body of rigorous research demonstrates that Teach For America corps members are highly effective in the classroom. A study published last year by the Urban Institute found that high school students taught by Teach For America teachers outperformed their peers, even those taught by fully certified teachers. The positive impact of having a Teach For America teacher was three times that of having a teacher with three or more years' experience. The full study is available at www.urban.org/publications/901157.html.

"Nothing is more important to the future of our country than education," Congresswoman Moore said. "This partnership between the Milwaukee Public Schools and Teach for America is just one more way that we can make sure our students are ready to compete in the global economy. This collaboration will help our students see the opportunities that await them, and will help attract young new talent to Milwaukee."

The MPS graduation rate has risen steadily, from 52 percent in 1999-2000 to 70 percent in 2006-07, yet Wisconsin still has one of the nation's largest academic achievement gaps between black and white students. Teach For America decided to expand to Milwaukee based on the level of support from community partners, the willingness of the school district to adopt new programs, and the potential for corps members to impact underserved students as teachers and on a broader scale as alumni.

More than 14,000 Teach For America alumni are working from every professional sector to level the playing field for children and families in low-income communities across the country. Wisconsin is home to 110 of these alumni, including 25 in Greater Milwaukee. Nationally, about two-thirds of Teach For America alumni remain in education, where they are starting schools, serving as principals and district administrators, and winning accolades in the classroom,

including 2007 teacher of the year awards in two states and the 2005 National Teacher of the Year Award.

In conjunction with the expansion announcement, Teach For America named Garrett Bucks as founding executive director of Teach For America-Milwaukee. Bucks, a 2003 Teach For America corps member in New Mexico, led his fifth grade students to progress three grade levels in a single year and raised more than \$7,000 in grants. For the past two years, he has served as Teach For America's Wisconsin recruitment director, doubling the number of corps members from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

"I look forward to working with the first group of corps members in Milwaukee this fall," Bucks said. "With strong support from the school district and the community, our corps members are situated to make a real and lasting difference for children in underserved schools."

The expansion to Milwaukee is part of Teach For America's national growth plan, which calls for a corps of 7,500 to be teaching in 33 regions by next year.

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